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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 000910

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA, WHA/PPC, AND WHA/CEN
STATE FOR PM, PM/RSAT, AND PM/PMAT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/20/2014

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [IZ](#) [HO](#)

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT MADURO DECLARES HONDURAS WILL WITHDRAW
FROM IRAQ

REF: A. STATE 87181

[1B.](#) LINDWALL/PALMER E-MAIL 04/19

[1C.](#) TEGUCIGALPA 893

[1D.](#) CJCS-CHOD APRIL 16 2004 LETTER

[1E.](#) TEGUCIGALPA 874

Classified By: Political Counselor Francisco Palmieri;
reasons 1.4 (a), (b), and (d).

[¶1.](#) (C) On April 19, President Maduro alerted the National Congress and announced publicly that Honduras would withdraw its troops from Iraq as soon as possible. The Government of Honduras (GOH) cited Spain's decision to immediately withdraw its troops from Iraq as a significant factor in its decision. Maduro stated, however, that Honduran troops had completed their congressionally-mandated mission there in response to UN Security Council Resolution 1483. Prior to his public announcement, President Maduro had increasingly expressed concern over events in Iraq and their domestic political ramifications (ref's C and E). (Note: Post understands, via high-level contacts at the Presidential Palace, that ref D was a significant factor in Maduro's decision to announce the withdrawal of Honduran troops. End Note.)

[¶2.](#) (C) Minister of Defense Federico Breve already contacted MILGP Commander regarding the logistics of Honduras' withdrawal from Iraq. MILGP Commander told Breve that those types of details would have to be worked out with CENTCOM and commanders in the field, although Post would assist the GOH where appropriate. (Comment: Post understands that Coalition airlift capacity is limited. Per ref B, we will work with the GOH regarding any unrealistic expectations of how quickly Honduran troops can be transported out of theater. End Comment.)

[¶3.](#) (C) Comment: Honduras' participation in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) was never popular, with public opinion polls indicating that 70 percent of the general public remain consistently "very opposed" to a Honduran troop presence in Iraq, regardless of their mission there. President Maduro's popularity remains tenuous and any Honduran casualties as a result of the GOH's participation in OIF could severely hurt his Nationalist Party in the next presidential election cycle, which has already begun in earnest. Maduro also privately expressed concern over potential political fallout he might suffer regarding the GOH's introduction of a UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) resolution on Cuba. It appears that Maduro has decided that any consternation in the U.S. over the GOH's decision to publicly announce a troop withdrawal as soon as possible is a lesser problem than having to explain to an increasingly skeptical electorate the continued need for Honduran troops in Iraq. End Comment

[¶4.](#) (U) Minimize considered.

PALMER